

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 NEA-10 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00

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FM AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8291

INFO AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMCONSUL CASABLANCA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE MONROVIA 7565

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BEXP, EAIR, LI

SUBJECT: FOKKER PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES IN LIBERIA

REFS: A. MONROVIA 529; B. MONROVIA 4293

CASABLANCA FOR RCAA

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. IN FLURRY OF SPECTACULAR PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITY, FOKKER FACTORY TEAM RECOUPED ANY PSYCHOLOGICAL LOSSES INCURRED BY GHANA AIRWAYS F-28 CRASH (JANUARY 27, REF A) BY PUTTING ON AIR-SHOW TYPE DEMONSTRATION OF REPAIRED AIRCRAFT BEFORE PRESIDENT TOLBERT AND NEWLY-OPERATIONAL SPRIGGS-PAYNE AIRPORT LAST SATURDAY. AFTER NEARLY EIGHT MONTHS OF WORK BY FACTORY TEAM, AIRCRAFT (9GABZ) MADE FIRST FLIGHT DEC. 10, TEST FLIGHTS DEC. 11 AND 12, AND MAXIMUM PERFORMANCE DEMONSTATION DEC. 13 ON OCCASION OF RECOMMISSIONING OF AIRCRAFT BY PRESIDENT. PRESIDENT AND OTHER OFFICIALS WERE APPARENTLY IMPRESSED BY FACTORY PILOT'S NEAR AEROBATIC DEMONSTRATION OF AIRCRAFT CAPABILITY. GHANA CREW DEPARTED 1640 WITH AIRCRAFT FOR ACCRA.

2. FOKKER TEAM ALSO DEMONSTRATED 40-SEAT TWIN-ENGINE VFW-614 ON DECEMBER 10, FOR VICE PRESIDENT GREENE AND OTHER OFFICIALS.

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3. DEMONSTRATION HAS OBVIOUSLY RENEWED INTEREST IN COMMERCIAL AIRCRAFT AND COMES AT TIME WHEN RUMORS ARE AGAIN CIRCULATING OF HIGH-LEVEL INTEREST IN COMMERCIAL JET AIRCRAFT, POSSIBLY FOR AIR LIBERIA. END UNCLASSIFIED.

4. BEGIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE. PAN AM MANAGER TOLD COMMERCIAL ATTACHE THAT PRESIDENT NOT ONLY INTERESTED ONCE AGAIN IN JET, BUT THAT STATUS OF AIR LIBERIA UNSETTLED. REPORTEDLY HUGES AIRWEST HAS GIVEN NOTICE IT WANTS CONTRACT CHANGED, AND THAT BRITISH CALEDONIA HAS MADE OFFER TO OPERATE AIR LIBERIA. BC OFFER APPARENTLY INCLUDES LARGE JET FOR AIR LIBERIA, ON CONDITION IT CAN OPERATE MONROVIA-US ROUTE. COMMENT: EMBASSY HAS NOT CHECKED OUT THIS REPORT, AND WILL REPORT AIR LIBERIA SITUATION SEPTEL. END COMMENT. AT SAME TIME FORMER PRESIDENTIAL G-II PILOT BACK IN TOWN, SUPPOSEDLY TO WIND UP DETAILS OF G-II SALE (REPORTEDLY CONSUMATED), BUT AGAIN ACCORDING TO RUMOR, OFFERING SERVICES FLY NEW JET. END LIMITED OFFICIAL USE.

5. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. EMBASSY LOOKING FORWARD TO BOEING 737 DEMO PLANNED FOR JANUARY. THIS WOULD ALSO APPEAR TO BE GOOD TIME FOR OTHER INTERESTED MANUFACTURERS TO MAKE SALES PITCHES IF INTERESTED.

6. SINCE PRESIDENT POSSIBLY INTERESTED IN FLYING AGAIN, SUGGEST THAT CESSNA BE CONTACTED TO SEE IF THEY STILL INTERESTED IN DOMONSTRATING CITATION TO PRESIDENT. FYI. INITIAL FEELERS MADE HERE FOLLOWING CESSNA/COMMERCIAL ATTACHE'S DISCUSSIONS THIS SUBJECT AT PARIS AIR SHOW, BUT NOT FOLLOW-UP MADE SINCE CESSNA REQUESTED DELAY. END FYI. IF CESSNA STILL INTERESTED, WE PREPARED ASCERTAIN WILLINGNESS OF PRESIDENT TO TAKE DEMO RIDE, SOMETIME EARLY NEXT YEAR. PLEASE ADVISE. END UNCLASSIFIED.
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